

To govern this the New York City Health Department have specified the maximum permissible dosage per exposure, and also the number of times it may be repeated in a year, this being limited to twelve.

L. H. Hempelman<sup>2</sup> writing in conjunction with Williams comments on the types of radiation injuries which might occur from the uncontrolled use of these machines, amongst them being interference with the growth of children's feet from the effect of radiation on young bone, as well as radiation burns.

There seem to be no reports of any actual instances of injury from this source, but its potential dangers remain. It is questioned by some whether these machines are essential for good shoe fitting or are simply part of sales promotion technique. They can only show the bone shadow and may therefore be misleading as to the amount of space actually taken up by the foot. Indeed, experienced chiropodists hold that x-ray shoe fitting may be the source of some painful foot disorders. X-ray apparatus always has inherent dangers and the value of these machines in the fitting of shoes hardly justifies the risk they involve.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

### National Health Week

There has been an increasing tendency in recent years to set aside a week for some worthy cause. Thus we have Fire Prevention Week, Education Week, etc. Six years ago, the Health League of Canada, the publishers of *Health* magazine, held their first annual "National Health Week". This year they have designated January 29 to February 4, 1950. The purpose of National Health Week is to make the public realize the value of health, both public and personal, and to serve as a reminder of the services which the medical profession has to offer.

If the present medical knowledge and armamentarium were efficiently and properly utilized, much sickness and suffering could be eliminated. It has been the problem of the medical profession, is now, and probably will continue to be, how to present their services to the public in the most suitable manner. This is one of the most urgent questions in the mind

of the medical profession today, and many experimental schemes are in operation throughout the world.

The public tend to put off seeing a doctor until compelled to do so. How often during a day's work do we say, "If only I had seen this patient sooner". In spite of pre-employment examinations, insurance examinations, etc., it is remarkable how many persons reach adult life without having been examined by a doctor. Many persons are reluctant to consult a doctor for fear he will find something wrong, or that he will prescribe some treatment which they cannot afford or find distasteful.

In view of these facts, there has been an increasing tendency for the medical profession to carry their services to the public, instead of passively waiting to be consulted. For instance, from September 21, 1949 to January 14, 1950, an intensive x-ray survey has been conducted in Boston, similar to surveys which have been completed in other American cities, during which time the goal is to obtain a chest x-ray of every person of 15 years of age or over, who lives, works, or transacts business in Boston. Similarly, the American Diabetic Association, from October 10 to 16, 1949, sponsored a drive to detect the estimated one million unknown diabetics in the United States, and concurrently, a drive to educate the public regarding the ravages of untreated diabetes mellitus. Other examples are, National Immunization Week, recently sponsored by the Health League of Canada, Cancer Detection Week, etc. It will be noted that the key figure in all these campaigns is still the family physician.

Thus, National Health Week serves a real purpose and deserves the utmost support of the medical profession. J.H.D.

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### ACTH In Asthma

It is too soon of course to appraise the value of ACTH in the treatment of disease. At the moment it is being tested in a very wide variety of conditions, amongst which allergy has been prominent. In the present issue Dr. Bram Rose reports results in a series of six cases of severe asthma. While the time element is most important in such cases, there is no doubt of the striking early relief produced by ACTH. Along with this paper may be placed a report by Bordley and others\* on the use of ACTH in a series of similar cases: there was evidence that this substance was capable of blocking hypersensitive reactions and encouraging results were recorded in the changes produced in polyps. The outlook is promising, but prolonged observation on the use of ACTH in asthma has yet to be carried out.

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2. HEMPELMANN, L. H.: *New England J. Med.*, 241: 335, 1949.

\* J. E. Bordley et al.: *Bull. Johns Hopkins Hosp.*